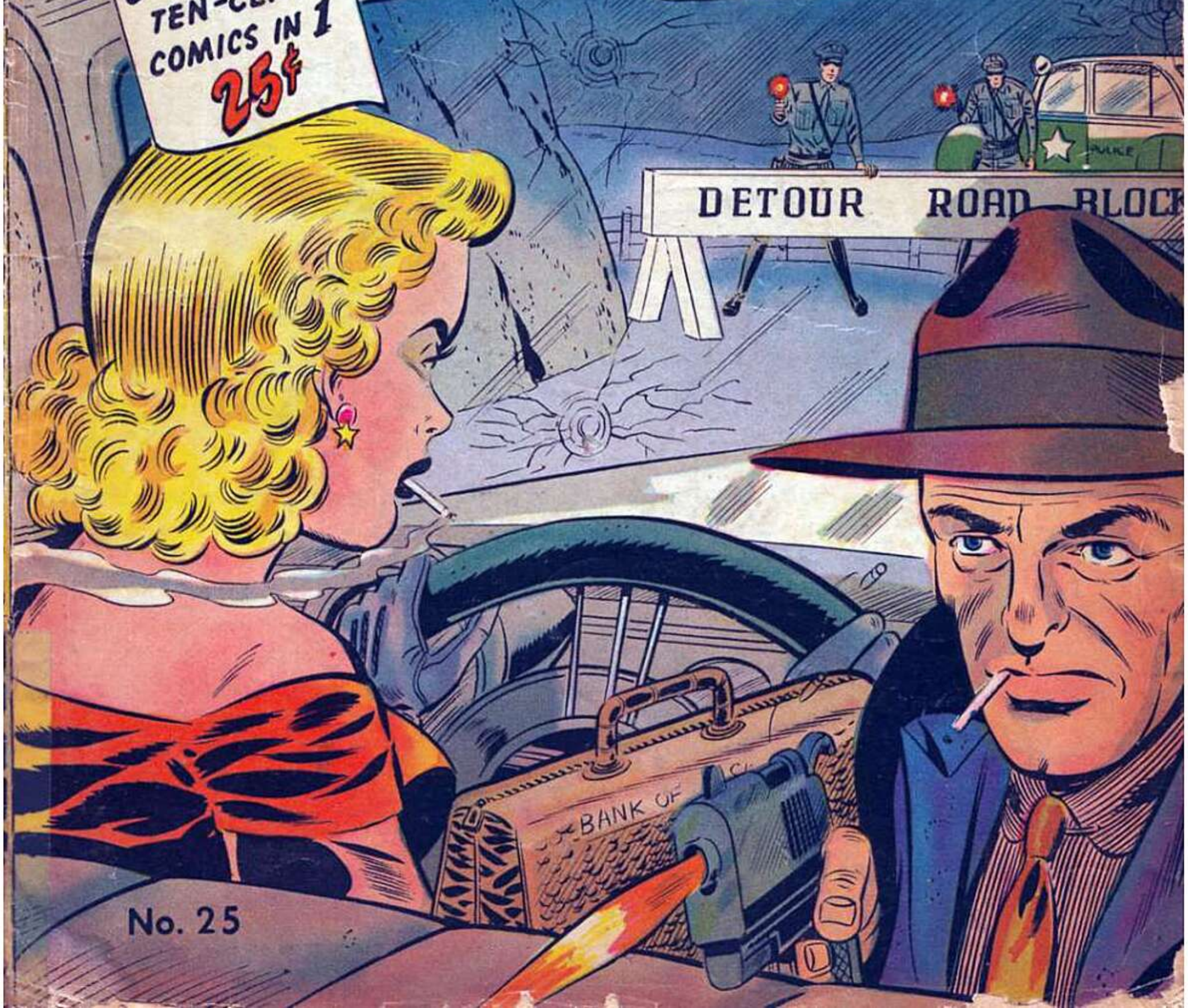
3 FULL-LENGTH COMICS IN 1

ANC

Authentic POLICE CASES

ST. JOHN TRADEMARK

GIANT EDITION
3 REGULAR TEN-CENT COMICS IN 1
25¢



No. 25

The Case of The WINKING BUDDHA

STEVE BULLITT PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE CRISP BLUE AND GOLD DAYS IN LATE OCTOBER. A SCAMP OF A WIND CHASED FRIGHTENED LEAVES IN CENTRAL PARK AND TEASED THE TREES ABOUT BEING BALD. NO ONE PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO THE CHINA DOLL OF A MAN MOUNTING THE BROWNSTONE STEPS.

YES, MISTER?

PLEASE, MR. STEVE BULLITT? WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR ME TO SPEAK WITH HIM?

YOU WAIT, SIR. I TELL MR. STEVE HE HAS VISITOR. HE COME SOON.

THANK YOU-- AND IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND AS TO TELL HIM IT IS IMPORTANT.

GENTLEMAN TO SEE YOU, MR. STEVE! LOOKS LIKE A CUSTOMER... SAYS IT'S IMPORTANT.

OKAY, BOP. BE THERE IN A MINUTE AN' I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT!

BOP IS ALWAYS RIGHT! HE CAN SMELL A PROSPECTIVE CLIENT A MILE AWAY.

I'M STEVE BULLITT, SIR. YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO ME ON BUSINESS?

AH, PLEASE, YES! I WISH TO RETAIN YOUR SERVICES, MR. BULLITT!

IF I MAY, SIR, I WILL TELL MY STORY FROM THE BEGINNING. I AM AN IMPORTER, AND RECENTLY I VISITED MY NATIVE CHINA. ON MY WAY BACK TO THE STATES, I STOPPED IN KOREA TO SEE FRIENDS. WHILE I WAS IN SEOUL...

SEOUL - "...ON THE STREET OF THE SPOONSMITHS, I CHANCED TO FIND THE SMALL SHOP OF AN OLD FRIEND OF MY FATHERS."

"WE TALKED FOR PERHAPS AN HOUR AND AS I WAS READY TO LEAVE

BEFORE YOU GO, MY SON, I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU. I KNOW YOUR INTEREST WILL BE GREAT.

AS YOU WISH VENERABLE ONE.

HEH-HEH! I HAD THOUGHT TO DIE WITH THIS LAST TREASURE-- BUT IT IS BETTER THAT THE SON OF MY OLD FRIEND HAVE IT.

TREASURE? WHAT, I WONDER, DOES THIS ANCIENT ONE SPEAK OF?

TAKE IT, MY SON... IF YOU HAVE WISDOM TO KNOW IT FOR WHAT IT IS.

OF COURSE, OLD ONE. IT IS A JADE BUDDHA-- BUT...

...A WINKING BUDDHA! A YI TAICHO! THANK YOU, YOUR KINDNESS WILL BE REWARDED!

"THAT NIGHT AS I SAT IN MY ROOM AT THE BANTO HOTEL..."

I HAVE BEEN MOST LUCKY TODAY. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF SEARCHING, IT FALLS INTO MY HANDS LIKE A CHERRY BLOSSOM IN MAY. BUT HOW TO GET IT TO THE STATES? MY LUGGAGE WILL BE SEARCHED BY THE KOREAN OFFICIALS. THEY WILL KNOW OF THE SACRED VALUE OF THE BUDDHA AND WOULD NEVER LET IT LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

FORTUNATELY, I REMEMBERED AN AMERICAN WOMAN I HAD MET ONLY THE DAY BEFORE AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE. HER NAME IS LOLA VANCE. AND SHE WAS LEAVING FOR AMERICA THAT VERY WEEK."

NICE OF YOU TO TREAT ME TO THIS NATIVE SAKI, MR. LU YIN. FIRST TIME I EVER HAD A GOOD LOOK AT THE NIGHT LIFE AROUND HERE.

SO GLAD YOU ENJOY IT, MISS VANCE BUT PLEASE, THE BUSINESS I SPOKE OF...

I WILL GIVE YOU ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS IF YOU WILL TAKE A PACKAGE BACK TO THE STATES FOR ME. I WILL PAY YOU WHEN YOU DELIVER IT.

ONE GRAND! OKAY-- IT'S A DEAL-- AS LONG AS IT AIN'T OPIUM YOU WANT SMUGGLED!

HERE, MISS VANCE. YOU AMERICANS ARE ALLOWED TO TAKE MANY THINGS HOME. KOREAN OFFICIALS DO NOT INSPECT YOUR BAGGAGE. I WILL SEE YOU IN THREE MONTHS IN NEW YORK.

AND SHE RAN OUT ON YOU, MR. YIN? TOOK YOUR BUDDHA AND BEAT IT?

AS YOU SAY IT, SIR-- SHE BEAT IT. BUT I HAVE LEARNED THAT SHE SAILED FOR NEW YORK TWO MONTHS AGO. PLEASE, IF YOU WOULD FIND HER...

IS THAT ALL YOU CAN TELL ME, MR. YIN? WHAT MAKES THIS BUDDHA SO VALUABLE?

PLEASE, SIR-- I CANNOT ANSWER QUESTIONS. I CAN ONLY GIVE MY WORD THAT THERE IS NOTHING CRIMINAL INVOLVED. AND I WILL PAY WELL.

A HUNDRED DOLLARS WILL DO AS A RETAINER, MR. YIN.

CERTAINLY. THERE WILL BE MORE IF IT IS NEEDED. ONLY FIND MY BUDDHA! THE GIRL I CARE NOTHING ABOUT ONCE I HAVE MY PROPERTY.

BEAUTIFUL MANNERS, OUR MR. YIN HAS...AND MORE BEHIND THAT BLAND FACE THAN SHOWS. BUT HIS MONEY ISN'T COUNTERFEIT-- SO I'LL TRY TO FIND HIS BLONDE BUDDHA SNATCHER.

OON...

HOW YA, STEVE? GOT A LITTLE SOMETHIN' YOU MIGHT WANTA KNOW!

ELLO, JOHNNY NGER-- COME IN. ST TOYING WITH FEW CHORDS, TRYG TO GET MY BRAIN INTO GH GEAR!

HE HAD A TAIL, THAT'S WHAT. SOME TALL GUY FOLLOWED HIM HERE AN' WAITED DOWN THE BLOCK. LAST I SAW, HE WAS TAILING HIM AGAIN... AND YOUR NEW CLIENT DIDN'T KNOW IT EITHER.

GOOD BOY, JOHNNY-- SHARP EYES! LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE IS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN MR. YIN'S BUSINESS CALLS! OH, PENNY, WILL YOU DO SOME PHONING FOR ME-- POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND WASHINGTON!

ORDERS CARRIED OUT, STEVE. HEADQUARTERS HAS NO RECORD ON MR. LU YIN. WASHINGTON GAVE ME A NEW YORK ADDRESS ON MISS LOLA VANCE--39 BARROW PLACE. IT'S IN THE VILLAGE.

HMM... PROBABLY HER OLD ADDRESS... CHANCES ARE SHE WON'T BE THERE, BUT I'LL CHECK.

LATER...

LOOKS LIKE THIS IS IT, STEVE -- 39 BARROW STREET.

RIGHT! NOW TO SEE IF OUR BIRD HAS FLOWN --AS IF I DIDN'T KNOW!

39

TAXI

MR. YIN DIDN'T STRIKE ME AS THE SORT OF MAN TO TOSS A HUNDRED BUCKS AWAY. HE'S PROBABLY ALREADY TRIED THIS ADDRESS AND DREW A BLANK.

HELLO. MY NAME IS STEVE BULLITT. I'M LOOKING FOR AN OLD FRIEND. HER NAME IS LOLA VANCE, AND...

HUMPH! NEVER HEARD OF YOU, MISTER, BUT I SURE KNOW YOUR FRIEND. I'M LOOKING FOR HER, TOO. IF I EVER GET MY HANDS ON THAT BLONDE...

SHE LEFT OWING ME A MONTH'S RENT, SHE DID! HER AND THAT NO-GOOD BEAN POLE OF A BOYFRIEND OF HERS. JUST A COUPLE OF CHISELERS!

SO? AND YOU SAY HER FRIEND WAS A TALL MAN? A SKINNY FELLOW?

THAT'S HIM! THIN AS A RAIL AND A CROOK IF I EVER SAW ONE! IF YOU EVER FIND THEM, MISTER, YOU JUST LET ME KNOW.

THANKS. IF I EVER FIND THEM I'LL -- ER, TRY TO GET YOUR MONEY

WOW! GLAD I DON'T OWE HER ANY MONEY!

I HEARD IT ALL, STEVE. THAT TALL GUY SOUNDS LIKE THE ONE THAT WAS TAILING MR. YIN THIS MORNING.

THEY PROBABLY HEARD HER IN BROOKLYN, JOHNNY. BUT YOU ARE RIGHT. SOUNDS LIKE THE SAME PARTY. NOW RUN ME DOWN TO THE "STAR TIMES" BUILDING.

STICK AROUND, JOHNNY! I'LL ONLY BE A FEW MINUTES-- GOT A LITTLE MORGUE CHECKING TO DO.

MORGUE? OH -- I GET IT!

STAR-TIMES

READ THE CLARION

PRESS

STEVE MAKES A NOTE OF THE TIME AND PLACE...

RIGHT, MR. YIN. I'LL BE THERE.

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW, SIR. YOU'RE BEING FOLLOWED. SOMEONE SHADOWED YOU THIS MORNING.

A SHADOW, MR. BULLITT? OH, YES! I UNDERSTAND NOW. AND THANK YOU.. BUT I DO NOT KNOW WHO COULD HAVE SUCH INTEREST IN MY HUMBLE AFFAIRS. GOODBYE, SIR.

IT IS A WISE MAN WHO IS PREPARED FOR TROUBLE, EVEN THOUGH HE DOES NOT SEEK IT!

HALF AN HOUR LATER...

EVENING, MR. BULLITT. THEY'RE EXPECTING YOU, SIR-- RIGHT UP-STAIRS!

GOOD EVENING, WARD-- AND YOU NEEDN'T TELL ME. I CAN HEAR THEM FROM HERE.

MUCH LATER...

IT'S BEEN A SWELL NIGHT, BUT I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO ASK YOU ABOUT YOURSELF, STEVE-- AND THE DETECTIVE BUSINESS. IS IT AS EXCITING AS IT SOUNDS?

THAT DEPENDS ON YOUR VIEWPOINT-- BUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, BILL-- SINCE THIS IS YOUR LAST FLING, I'LL TAKE YOU ALONG ON A JOB TONIGHT BUT DON'T EXPECT TOO MUCH.

WE CAN JUST ABOUT MAKE IT. I'VE GOT TO MEET SOMEONE AT THE DRUM AND MONKEY TAVERN AT MIDNIGHT.

DRUM AND MONKEY TAVERN! THAT SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A THRILLER!

AFRAID YOU'LL BE BE DISAPPOINTED, BILL. JUST A ROUTINE JOB. AND YOU UNDERSTAND THAT I CAN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING.. I'VE GOT TO PROTECT MY CLIENT'S PRIVACY.

SURE, I KNOW. DON'T WORRY. I'LL JUST KEEP MY EYES OPEN AND MY MOUTH SHUT. YOU WON'T EVEN KNOW I'M AROUND.

I'D LIKE TO HAVE A LOOK AT YOUR FILES, BILL. A LITTLE MATTER OF BUSINESS!

YOU MEAN THE MORGUE! SURE THING. GRAB YOURSELF A SEAT AND BE COMFORTABLE. YOU KNOW THE STAR-TIMES. EVEN PRIVATE EYES ARE WELCOME.

HI, STEVE-- LONG TIME NO SEE!

HMM... OUR MR. YIN SEEMS TO BE ON THE UP AND UP... WELL-KNOWN COLLECTOR, CONNOISSEUR OF ORIENTAL ART, WEALTHY, TOO. HAS GIVEN LARGE SUMS AND A LOT OF TIME TO THE PROMOTION OF SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS, ETC., ETC...

WEALTHY MR. YIN

WAIT UP, STEVE! I DARNED NEAR FORGOT TO TELL YOU THE MOST IMPORTANT THING. I'M GETTING MARRIED DAY AFTER TOMORROW!

NO KIDDING? AND WHAT POOR UNFORTUNATE GIRL WOULD HAVE THE NERVE TO MARRY A NEWSPAPER MAN?

HER NAME'S EVE-- EVE MARTIN. BUT THE BOYS ARE GIVING ME A BACHELOR DINNER TONIGHT AT THE PRESS CLUB AND I WANT YOU TO COME.

TONIGHT! I GUESS I CAN MAKE IT, BILL. MY BUSINESS ISN'T SO URGENT THAT I HAVE TO MISS A FRIEND'S FAREWELL TO FREEDOM. SEE YOU TONIGHT.

OH, STEVE--YOU'RE BACK JUST IN TIME. MR. YIN IS ON THE PHONE.

KEEP YOUR MUDDY PAWS OFF ME, BRUTE. OKAY, PENNY-- I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!

HELLO, MR. YIN-- SOMETHING NEW?

AS YOU SAY, MR. BULLITT-- SOMETHING NEW-- A DEVELOPMENT. THE YOUNG LADY, MISS LOLA VANCE, JUST CALLED ME ON THE PHONE. SHE WISHES TO DELIVER MY--ER, PROPERTY THIS EVENING.

THE YOUNG LADY IS VERY FRIGHTENED, MR. BULLITT. SHE SUSPECTS SOMEONE IS FOLLOWING HER AND WISHES AN ESCORT. IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND, PLEASE... AT MIDNIGHT TONIGHT...

AS STEVE PROMISED MR. YIN, HE REACHES THE DRUM AND MONKEY AT MIDNIGHT, A GARISH PLACE FREQUENTED BY SAILORS AND LONGSHOREMEN...

YOU WANT A TABLE, GENTS?

NO, THANKS WE'RE JUST MEETING SOMEONE.

WAIT HERE, BILL. I THINK I SEE MY QUARRY.

LOLA VANCE? STEVE BULLITT, MR. YIN TOLD YOU ABOUT ME?

YOU'RE RIGHT ON TIME, HONEY!

MR. YIN TOLD ME ABOUT YOU, TOO. BUT HE DIDN'T TELL ME ENOUGH, LOOKS LIKE. I DIDN'T KNOW COPPERS CAME LIKE YOU, STEVE. COME ON -- I RENTED A CAR!

YOU'RE A LITTLE OVERDUE, LOLA. MR. YIN WAS REALLY WORRIED. AND WHAT'S THIS ABOUT BEING FOLLOWED? YOU DON'T SEEMED TO BE VERY FRIGHTENED AT THE MOMENT.

IT'S TRUE... I TELL YOU EVERY TIME I LEFT THE HOUSE I COULD FEEL SOMEONE BEHIND ME! I BEEN SCARED TO DEATH. HERE'S THE CAR!

YOU KNOW THE ADDRESS, LOLA

HO-HUM... STEVE WAS RIGHT ABOUT NOT EXPECTING TOO MUCH. NOTHING EXCITING ABOUT THIS!

SURE, SURE. RIVERSIDE DRIVE AND 103RD.

DARN! I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE FIXING THIS STREET -- NOW WE'LL HAVE TO GO AROUND...

DETOUR

CLOSED

EASY DOES IT, LOLA! WANT ME TO DRIVE?

I CAN HANDLE IT, BUT WHY THEY'VE SUDDENLY GOT TO START TEARING UP EVERY STREET IN NEW YORK...

OHHH-- I STALLED THE MOTOR!

GET OUT, LOLA. I'M TAKING OVER RIGHT NOW!

HEY!

A MAN SUDDENLY STEPS STEALTHILY OUT OF THE NIGHT SHADOWS...

THIS IS A STICKUP. NO TROUBLE AND YOU DON'T GET HURT!

OH, NO! PLEASE DON'T!

C'MON -- OUT!

CAN'T GET TO MY GUN! BUT I JUST HOLD ONTO THIS BAG OF LOLA'S AND WAIT... MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE!

TIRES SCREAM IN AGONY... AND ANOTHER CAR SKIDS MADLY AROUND A CORNER AND BEARS DOWN ON THEM...

BILL! TAKE THE GIRL AND DUCK! QUICK! DOWN!

THIS LIGHT IS TERRIBLE! I'M NOT HIT-TING ANYTHING BUT THE AIR! BUT MAYBE I'M LUCKY-- TWO AGAINST ONE! AND THEY DON'T SEEM TO LIKE IT ANY BETTER THAN I DO.

MEANWHILE, LOLA AND BILL HAVE HIT THE DITCH...

B-BROTHER! AND JUST A M-MINUTE AGO I SAID IT WAS SO D-DULL! LOOKS LIKE I'LL BE GOING TO A FUNERAL. AND THIS GIRL'S HURT...

THE ATTACKERS SWING AROUND THEIR SEDAN AND SPEED AWAY. THE FIGHT IS OVER AS SWIFTLY AS IT BEGAN...

ALL OVER, BILL, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? COME ON, FELLOW. WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE.

LOLA FELL, STEVE. HIT HER HEAD ON SOMETHING!

OKAY--GET HER IN THE CAR. PROBABLY IT'S ONLY A CUT. I'LL TAKE A LOOK!

DETOUR

IT TAKES STEVE BUT A MOMENT TO DETERMINE THAT LOLA'S HURT IS SUPERFICIAL.

SHE'S ALL RIGHT! NOW LISTEN... TAKE HER SOMEWHERE FAST-- YOUR GIRL'S APARTMENT! I'LL EXPLAIN LATER! SEE YOU THERE!

S-SURE. YOU CAN FIND IT LISTED IN THE PHONE BOOK. BUT I DON'T...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND. BUT SHE CAN'T GO TO MY PLACE BECAUSE THEY MIGHT FIND HER AGAIN. SHE'S IN DANGER, I THINK! NOW BEAT IT. I'LL DELIVER THIS PACKAGE TO MR. YIN AND SEE YOU LATER!

NOW TO GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE THE RIOT SQUAD SHOWS UP. NOTHING I'D LIKE LESS THAN TO TRY AND EXPLAIN TO THE COPS WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND MYSELF. WELL, I'VE GOT THE BUDDHA. NOW FOR A CAB...

I'D LIKE TO SEE MR. YIN AT ONCE, PLEASE. THE NAME IS BULLITT!

IF YOU WILL WAIT IN THE LIBRARY, PLEASE, SIR. I WILL TELL THE MASTER YOU ARE HERE.

YIN

A MOMENT LATER, STEVE IS USHERED INTO THE PRESENCE OF LU YIN...

AHH-- AT LAST, MR. BULLITT! I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK SOMETHING HAD GONE WRONG. AND THE YOUNG LADY? MY JADE BUDDHA?

THE YOUNG LADY IS NOT AVAILABLE AT THE MOMENT, MR. YIN. I HAD BETTER LUCK WITH THE BUDDHA.

HERE, MR. YIN, YOU'RE LUCKY. YOU'D BE SURPRISED AT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE TRIED TO GET THIS LITTLE OBJECT TONIGHT.

INDEED? BUT NO DETAILS NOW. PLEASE DO NOT THINK ME RUDE, BUT MY ONLY INTEREST IS IN THE WINKING BUDDHA.

MAGNIFICIENT! TRULY LOVELY... A GREAT WORK OF ART, MR. BULLITT--ALMOST PERFECT!

ALMOST PERFECT-- BUT NOT QUITE. IT IS NOT MY BUDDHA-- IT IS A FAKE. PLEASE TAKE IT AWAY WITH YOU!

MEANWHILE, BILL TUCKER TAKES THE INJURED LOLA TO THE APARTMENT OF EVE MARTIN, HIS FIANCEE...

GOSH, HONEY, I HATED TO BUST IN ON YOU, BUT STEVE KNOWS BEST ABOUT THIS SORT OF THING-- AND HE SAID...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, DARLING. IT'S THIS POOR GIRL WHO NEEDS HELP. BESIDES, I'M SURE YOUR FRIEND HAS A GOOD EXPLANATION FOR THIS.

DARLING, NO WONDER I LOVE YOU SO MUCH! HERE I GO OUT ON A WILD ADVENTURE, BRING A STRANGE GIRL HERE, ALL BLEEDING, AND STILL YOU SAY YOU'LL MARRY ME TOMORROW.

YOU IDIOT! OF COURSE, I'M GOING TO MARRY YOU! JUST TRY TO GET OUT OF IT NOW--

MILLICENT BENNETT, EVE'S COUSIN, ENTERS AT EXACTLY THE WRONG MOMENT...

OH--OH! MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE KNOCKED! OR SHALL I GO OUT AND COME IN AGAIN?

DON'T BE SILLY, MILLICENT. COME IN AND SAY HELLO TO BILL.

HELLO.

HELLO, BILL--AND GOOD-NIGHT. I'M GOING TO BED. AFTER ALL, I HAVE TO WORK FOR A LIVING!

WELL, GOOD NIGHT THEN, MILLICENT!

REALLY, BILL, YOU SHOULDN'T THINK OF MILLICENT THE WAY YOU DO. IT'S JUST HER WAY OF TALKING...

IT BURNS ME UP, HONEY, THE WAY SHE ACTS TOWARD YOU. ALL THOSE CATTY THINGS SHE'S ALWAYS SAYING, JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT MONEY AND SHE HASN'T. AND AFTER YOU GIVE HER A HOME AND ALL. SHE HATES US BOTH.

SUDDENLY A FRENZIED SHRIEK RINGS THROUGH THE APARTMENT...

GOOD GRIEF! MUST BE THAT GIRL AGAIN!

NO, BILL! THAT WAS MILLICENT! WE FORGOT TO TELL HER ABOUT THAT WOMAN!

OHH--MY HEART JUST STOPPED! WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE ANYWAY? WHO IS THAT--THAT CREATURE?

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, MILLICENT! EVERYTHING'S OKAY. COME ON, AND I'LL FIX YOU A NICE DRINK.

JUST A LITTLE MORE BLEEDING BILL... I DON'T THINK IT'S ANYTHING SERIOUS.

STEVE, AFTER STOPPING OFF AT HOME TO CHANGE CLOTHES, ARRIVES AT EVE'S...

STEVE! AT LAST! BOY--AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU!

EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, BILL?

STEVE IS INTRODUCED TO EVE MARTIN AND HEARS BILL'S STORY.

WHAT A NIGHT! ALL THAT GUN-PLAY, AND THEN I'VE HAD ONE INJURED GIRL ON MY HANDS... AND ONE HYSTERICAL ONE...

HYSTERICAL? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHEN I CALLED, YOU SAID LOLA WAS OUT COLD.

HE MEANS MY COUSIN MILLICENT, MR. BULLITT. BUT I JUST GAVE HER A SEDATIVE AND PUT HER TO BED...

...E'S IN HERE--I MEAN ...E INJURED GIRL. SHE ...AS STILL UNCONSCIOUS ...EN I LEFT ...ER A FEW ...UTES AGO.

THAT CUT ON HER HEAD DIDN'T SEEM TOO BAD TO ME. SHE MIGHT BE FAKING. AND SHE'D BETTER HAVE A LOT OF RIGHT ANSWERS READY FOR ME!

WHY--SHE'S G-GONE!

SHE WAS FAKING! WAITING FOR A CHANCE TO GET AWAY, AND NOW I'M RIGHT BACK WHERE I STARTED.

I GUESS I OWE YOU SOME EXPLANATIONS, BILL, SINCE IT WAS MY INVITATION THAT GOT YOU INTO ALL THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

AND I'M THINKING OF WHAT KILLED THE CAT, STEVE.

I'D BE A LIAR IF I SAID I'M NOT CURIOUS, STEVE. AFTER ALL, I AM A NEWSPAPER MAN!

STEVE TELLS THEM, WITHOUT EXPOSING HIS CLIENT'S IDENTITY...

SO... THE SHOOTING WAS ALL ABOUT A LITTLE JADE BUDDHA!

I'LL BET IT'S WORTH A MINT!

I HAVE THE WORD OF AN EXPERT THAT IT'S A FAKE. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE WOULDN'T HAVE IT IN HIS HOUSE--GAVE IT TO ME! SO, IF YOU WANT IT, EVE, I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU, BUT DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU IT'S PHONY!

THE SECOND ATTEMPT WAS ON THE LEVEL. AND THEY SCARED OFF THE TALL FELLOW JUST AS HE HAD US COLD.

HEY-- WAIT A MINUTE! SOMEONE'S AT THE DOOR! NOW WHO COULD IT BE AT THIS HOUR?

BBUZZLLLLL

I'M LT. JONES FROM HEADQUARTERS. WE GOT A CALL SAYING MURDER HAD BEEN COMMITTED HERE. WHERE'S THE BODY?

M-MURDER! B-B-BODY!

THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING YOU, STEVE. SOMEONE CALLED AND REPORTED A MURDER AT THIS ADDRESS. I JUST HAPPENED TO BE AT THE PRECINCT, SO I TOOK OVER. NOW HOW ABOUT IT?

SOMEONE'S PLAYING HORSE WITH YOU, BARNEY. THERE'S BEEN NO MURDER!

LET'S HAVE A LITTLE CHAT IN PRIVATE, BARNEY. MAYBE I CAN CLEAR MATTERS UP.

BUT SOMEONE DID CALL US AND IF IT'S A JOKE, THEY'RE GONNA BE SORRY. WE GOT PLENTY TO DO NOW WITHOUT CHASING FALSE ALARMS.

I *AM* ON A CASE AND-- AND SOME QUEER THINGS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING TONIGHT. BUT MURDER WAS NOT ONE OF THEM. AND NO ONE CALLED FROM HERE.

WELL-L-L, IF YOU SAY SO. YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SQUARE WITH THE DEPARTMENT, STEVE... WHICH IS A GOOD IDEA IF YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR LICENSE. WHAT'S THE LOW-DOWN?

AS IS HIS LEGAL RIGHT WHEN NO CRIME HAS BEEN COMMITTED, STEVE DOES NOT TELL LT. JONES EVERYTHING. BUT HE DOES EXPLAIN ABOUT LOLA AND HER STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE.

WE GOT A REPORT ON THAT GUNPLAY TONIGHT. THAT WAS YOU, HUH? AND YOU WAS JUST ESCORTING THIS DAME WHO WAS BEING FOLLOWED? AND THEN SHE DISAPPEARED? ALL SOUNDS SCREWY TO ME.

IT IS SCREWY, BARNEY. BUT I'M WORKING ON IT AND I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHAT BREAKS. C'MON-- LET'S JOIN THE OTHERS.

IT'S TIME I LEAVE BEFORE I GET MORE CONFUSED. GOODNIGHT, STEVE. YOU THREE COME DOWN TO HEADQUARTERS IN THE MORNING. MAYBE YOU CAN FIND THAT DISAPPEARING DAME IN THE GALLERY.

THE ROGUES' GALLERY, EVE! WE'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.

THE -- G-GALLERY?

I WAS GOING TO LOOK FOR LOLA AT HEADQUARTERS ANYWAY. I'M GLAD JONES SUGGESTED IT. I'LL MEET YOU THERE IN THE MORNING. BY THE WAY, EVE, I THINK I'LL KEEP THE BUDDHA A WHILE YET.

OF COURSE, STEVE. I'LL GET IT. I HID IT UNDER THE CUSHION WHEN THE POLICE CAME.

THANKS FOR HIDING IT. YOU CAN HAVE IT AGAIN. BUT FOR TONIGHT, I'D BETTER KEEP IT.

WOE IS ME! AND TO THINK I BROUGHT ALL THIS ON MYSELF BY WANTING TO SEE WHAT A PRIVATE EYE DOES!

STEVE OPENS THE DOOR AND...

I'LL BE-- THIS MUST BE OLD HOME WEEK!

OOPS! 'SCUSE IT!

RONALD! RONALD CARSTAIRS!

WHO IS THIS CHARACTER?

'LO EVE! SWEET, LOVELY L'IL EVE! GONNA GET MARRIED AN' LEAVE POOR OLD 'SOB' RONALD...

THIS DOES IT! LEMME AT 'IM!

NO, BILL, PLEASE!

PLEASE TAKE HIM AWAY, STEVE. IT'S RONALD CARSTAIRS! HE WANTED TO MARRY ME, AND WHEN I BECAME ENGAGED TO BILL, HE-- WELL, HE'S BEEN BOTHERING ME EVER SINCE!

SURE THING! I'LL HANDLE HIM. SO LONG, YOU TWO!

THE NEXT MORNING, STEVE GOES TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS TO MEET BILL AND EVE...

I SURE GET BAD BREAKS. LAST NIGHT WAS THE FIRST ONE I TOOK OFF IN WEEKS AND I MISS ALL THE FUN!

FUN, EH? THAT'S A MATTER OF OPINION, JOHNNY. STICK AROUND, BECAUSE I WON'T BE LONG HERE.

TAXI

GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE. FIND ANYTHING INTERESTING YET?

HUH-- OH... HELLO, STEVE. I WAS JUST GETTING READY TO CALL YOU!

I'M DIZZY FROM LOOKING AT SO MANY PICTURES.

HALF AN HOUR LATER...

HEY--I STRUCK GOLD! IF THIS ISN'T THAT LOLA DAME, I'LL EAT IT!

YOU'RE **SURE** THIS IS THE GIRL? HMM... REAL NAME--LUCILLE VANDIVER...ONLY ONE CONVICTION--SIX MONTHS FOR SHOP-LIFTING BACK IN 1942. NO RECENT ENTRIES...

780

Name Lucilla Vandiver

5'7" · Weight

UMM...IT'S MY BLONDE PHANTOM, ALL RIGHT, LUCILLE VANDIVER! CHANGED TO LOLA VANCE SO SHE COULD STILL USE HER MARKED LUGGAGE AND OTHER EFFECTS. A LOT OF THEM DO THAT.

ASSOCIATE OF SMALL TIME RACKETEERS, AMONG THEM BEING CARL RATCLIFFE AND SOLOMON SLADE. WELL, SHE LIKES BAD COMPANY! RATCLIFFE HASN'T BEEN AROUND TOWN FOR A LONG TIME, THOUGH, AND WE NEVER COULD GET ANYTHING ON SLADE.

SLADE? NEVER HEARD OF HIM. WHAT'S HIS RACKET?

HE'S AN ODD FISH, SOLOMON SLADE. SORT OF ART DEALER, CURIOS AND STUFF. GOT A LITTLE PLACE ON THIRD AVE. THE GEM SQUAD'S BEEN WATCHING HIM, OFF AND ON, TRYING TO CATCH HIM ACTING AS A FENCE. NO LUCK...

AT LAST! IF THIS SLADE IS AN ART DEALER, HE MIGHT BE TIED IN WITH THE BUDDHA IN SOME WAY OR OTHER! AT LEAST IT'S A HOPE...

BARNEY! THIS CARL RATCLIFFE, THE ONE LOLA WENT AROUND WITH, AND YOU SAID WAS OUT OF TOWN!

SURE WE HAVE. WAIT A SECOND, I'LL HAVE GUS BRING IT IN.

YOU SHOULD HAVE A FILE ON HIM...

A FEW MINUTES LATER..

THANKS, GUS. AND DO ME A FAVOR, WILL YOU? JOHNNY ANGER'S PARKED AT THE CURB--ASK HIM TO COME IN HERE.

SURE WILL, STEVE.

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT ON YOUR MIND, STEVE?

JOHNNY ANGER STUDIES THE ROGUES GALLERY PHOTO...

YEP! THAT'S THE GUY, STEVE.

GOOD!

CAN'T TELL YOU THE WORKS, BARNEY. NOW! BUT YOUR CARL RATCLIFFE-- ALL SIX FEET FIVE OF HIM-- IS BACK IN TOWN. HE'S BEEN TAILING A CLIENT OF MINE. AND HE WAS IN ON THE FIREWORKS LAST NIGHT. SEE YOU LATER, BARNEY!

OKAY, OKAY! SO MAKE LIKE A CLAM, BUT YOU BETTER KEEP YOUR NOSE CLEAN, LAD!

GUESS WE'RE ALL THROUGH HERE, EVE. BUT WHERE IS BILL?

HE HAD TO GO TO HIS OFFICE, BUT I WANTED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING, STEVE. I SHOULD'VE THOUGHT OF IT LAST NIGHT, ONLY THERE WAS SO MUCH EXCITEMENT...

ABOUT THE LITTLE BUDDHA! MY UNCLE CHRIS MIGHT BE ABLE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING ABOUT IT. HE'S CURATOR AT THE MUNICIPAL CITY MUSEUM AND HE'S AN EXPERT ON SUCH MATTERS.

HO! NOW SHE TELLS ME! WELL, I'VE GOT THE BUDDHA IN MY POCKET AND THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT. COME ON, WE'LL PAY YOUR UNCLE A VISIT NOW.

DON'T MENTION BILL OR MY MARRIAGE. UNCLE CHRIS DOESN'T LIKE BILL! SAYS HE'S ONLY AFTER MY MONEY. UNCLE IS MY TRUSTEE, YOU KNOW.

I DIDN'T KNOW. BUT HE'S WRONG ABOUT BILL TUCKER. THERE'S NO NICER GUY ALIVE! IF HE WANTS TO MARRY YOU-- YOU CAN BE SURE IT ISN'T FOR YOUR MONEY!

EVE, MY DEAR! WHAT BRINGS *YOU* HERE? I THOUGHT YOU'D BE HOME FOOLING WITH YOUR TROUSSEAU... GETTING READY TO MARRY THAT CONFOUNDED YOUNG PUPPY!

NOW, UNCLE CHRIS!

HMM... SO I DON'T MENTION THE MARRIAGE! BUT HE DOES.

STEVE IS INTRODUCED TO CHRISTOPHER MARTIN AND ASKS FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE WINKING BUDDHA...

WELL! IT *IS* A WINKING BUDDHA! GODFREY! BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'D HEARD OF ONE, I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN THEY EXISTED. BUT IT IS! A REAL *YI TAICHO!* MAY I ASK WHERE YOU GOT THIS, YOUNG MAN?

SORRY, SIR, I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT. BUT I DO KNOW THIS -- AT LEAST I HAVE IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY-- THE FIGURE ISN'T GENUINE. IT'S A FAKE!

WHAT DID YOU SAY? *A FAKE?* THIS FIGURE ISN'T GENUINE? GODFREY, SIR! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! WHY--IT'S PERFECT!... NOT THAT I'VE EVER SEEN A WINKING BUDDHA BEFORE, BUT I DO KNOW JADE. AND I KNOW CRAFTSMANSHIP!

IT WOULD HAVE FOOLED ME--AND NOW YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THE WINKING BUDDHAS EH? SEEMS TO ME THERE'S SOMETHING IN THIS BOOK-- IT'S BEEN SO LONG...

BUDDHAS, HE SAYS PLURAL--AND WHAT'S THAT FALLING OUT OF HIS BOOK? HE DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE IT!

ONLY A BOOK MARK.

OCT 20 1949

OCTOBER 20

THERE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE 12 OF THE BUDDHAS! MADE ABOUT 600 YEARS AGO IN KOREA DURING THE *YI TAICHO* DYNASTY WHEN KOREAN CULTURE REACHED IT S HEIGHT. THE LEGEND IS FRAGMENTARY, OF COURSE.

TWELVE?

EMPEROR KWAN SIK HAD THE FIGURINES MADE-- ONE FOR EACH OF HIS 12 CHILDREN. LEGEND HAS IT THAT HE HAD THE ARTISANS EXECUTED IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS SO THEY COULD NEVER BE DUPLICATED. I WISH I KNEW MORE.

YOU'VE BEEN A GREAT HELP, SIR.

SEE YOU AT THE CHURCH TOMORROW NIGHT, UNCLE.

SORRY TO LEAVE YOU, EVE, BUT I'VE GOT THINGS TO ATTEND TO. AND GIVE ME THE BUDDHA AGAIN. I MAY NEED IT. BUT DON'T WORRY, IT'S STILL YOURS!

HERE, AND I ALSO AT DOUBLE-INDIAN-GIVER-- REMEMBER, EXPECT YOU THE WEDDING.

ON THE ROARING EAST SIDE, LURKING BENEATH THE CROSS BARRED SHADOWS OF THE EL, STEVE LOCATES THE DINGY SHOP OF SOLOMON SLADE, WHOSE NAME HAD BEEN LINKED WITH THAT OF LOLA VANCE AND CARL RATCLIFFE ON THE POLICE DOSSIER...

THIS MUST BE IT, STEVE. SOLOMON SLADE.

OKAY. WAIT FOR ME WHILE I SEE IF OUR MR. SLADE KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT THE TALL MR. RATCLIFFE, OR LOLA. NOT THAT HE WILL ADMIT KNOWING THEM, NATURALLY.

SOLOMON SLADE ANTIQUES

STEVE DECIDES ON A BRUSQUE FRONTAL APPROACH...:

I'M STEVE BULLITT, A PRIVATE DETECTIVE. I WANT SOME INFORMATION AND I THINK YOU CAN GIVE IT TO ME!

A DETECTIVE? INFORMATION? I CAN'T IMAGINE, SIR, WHAT YOU THINK I COULD TELL YOU. BUT PERHAPS WE'D BETTER STEP INSIDE!

SIT DOWN, PLEASE. AND TELL ME WHY YOU THINK I WOULD HAVE ANY INFORMATION OF VALUE.

I'LL TELL YOU ALL RIGHT, SLADE. YOU KNOW LOLA VANCE, OR PERHAPS YOU KNEW HER AS LUCILLE VANDIVER...

HER WHEREABOUTS ARE WORTH A HUNDRED BUCKS.

OF MR. YIN'S MONEY.

DEAR ME, SIR! YOU ARE IMPETUOUS. AH--A HUNDRED DOLLARS, DID YOU SAY?

HMM... I WISH I COULD EARN THAT MONEY.

CRACK

INDEED, YES! I SHOULD LIKE TO EARN A HUNDRED DOLLARS. BUT I'M AFRAID I CAN'T HELP, MR.--ER--BULLITT. I DID ONCE KNOW THIS PERSON, VERY SLIGHTLY, BUT IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE I'VE SEEN HER

UGH! MUST HE CRACK HIS KNUCKLES WHILE HE LIES?

CRACK!

HMM... DON'T TELL ME THAT OUR DIGNIFIED MR. SLADE IS USING LIPSTICK ON HIS CIGARETTES THESE DAYS!

OKAY, MR. SLADE! PASS THAT FOR NOW. HOW ABOUT TELLING ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE WINKING BUDDHA.

I KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE *YI TAICHO* BUDDHAS, SIR. ONLY WHAT ANY MAN IN MY BUSINESS WOULD KNOW.

I COULD TELL YOU A LITTLE SOMETHING OF THE LEGEND, SIR. OF THE EMPEROR WHO HAD THE BUDDHAS MADE FOR HIS CHILDREN. HIS NAME, I BELIEVE, WAS KWAN SIK--

SKIP IT, MY FRIEND. I'LL BE SEEING YOU AGAIN.

AS STEVE IS ABOUT TO LEAVE...

DIDN'T WASTE ANY TIME, DID YOU?

NO, I DIDN'T. BUT YOU'RE WASTING YOURS, BARNEY. SLADE SAYS HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ANYTHING. HE WON'T EVEN TALK FOR MONEY.

N SLADE

WHAT'S UP, STEVE? HOW COME THE LIEUTENANT IS NOSING AROUND DOWN HERE?

CAN'T BE SURE, JOHNNY, BUT I IMAGINE IT'S BECAUSE HE'S NO DOPE. HE KNOWS THERE'S A LOT I'M NOT TELLING HIM AND HE LIKES TO GO SNIFFING AROUND. LET'S HURRY.

JOHNNY ANGER WHEELS THE CAB AROUND THE BLOCK AND PARKS DOWN A SIDE STREET.

MAKE LIKE YOU'RE WORKING ON THE CAR, JOHNNY. THAT ALLEY UP AHEAD RUNS BACK OF SLADE'S SHOP, AND IN JUST ABOUT A MINUTE, THE EXODUS SHOULD BEGIN.

HUH? EXODUS? OH, I GET YOU NOW. YOU MEAN LT. JONES MIGHT SCARE SOMEONE OUT OF THERE.

SUDDENLY...

AHH.. I THOUGHT SO! SLADE DOESN'T USE LIPSTICK, AFTER ALL. STAY ON THE BALL, JOHNNY, CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE HER AGAIN.

SURE! I'M LIKE GLUE BUT SHE'S HAILING A HACK

BUT DON'T LET HER SPOT US!

SHE'S HEADING FOR THE RIVER, STEVE. LOOKS LIKE MAYBE SHE LIVES IN BROOKLYN.

MORRIS

YOU GUESSED IT, JOHNNY. SHE IS MAKING FOR BROOKLYN.

RONALD CARSTAIRS FINALLY GOES AWAY. HALF AN HOUR LATER, EVE OPENS THE DOOR AGAIN...

UNCLE! I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE BILL. AND THOSE FLOWERS.. FOR ME?

WHO ELSE, MY DEAR? BUT WHAT'S THE TROUBLE? YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A GIRL WHO IS GETTING MARRIED TOMORROW. NOT THAT I WHOLLY APPROVE OF THE YOUNG PUP, BUT AFTER ALL...

UNCLE, YOU DARLING! THEY'RE LOVELY.

JUST A LITTLE TOKEN, MY DEAR. GOT TO THINKING THAT PERHAPS I'VE BEEN A LITTLE HARD ABOUT YOUR MARRIAGE. BUT I'VE MEANT WELL, EVE. IT'S JUST THAT I'VE HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR MONEY AND...

I UNDERSTAND, UNCLE. JUST A MINUTE, WHILE I PUT THESE FLOWERS IN SOME WATER..

OF COURSE, MY DEAR.

IF MY FRIENDS WANT TO MAKE ME HAPPY, THEY CAN JUST FILL THE CHURCH WITH FLOWERS TOMORROW.

HAH-HAH! YOU CAN BE SURE OF THAT. I'LL PUT A BEE IN A FEW EARS.

HERE! IT'S THREE O'CLOCK -- AND I'VE GOT AN APPOINTMENT AT THE CLUB IN FIFTEEN MINUTES. I'LL HAVE TO RUN, MY DEAR.

SO LATE! I NEVER KNOW THE TIME SINCE I BROKE MY WATCH -- AND I NEVER THINK TO LOOK AT THE CLOCK.

OHH -- I HOPE NOTHING HAS HAPPENED TO BILL!

YOU MUSTN'T WORRY, MY CHILD. PUTS LINES IN YOUR FACE. THOUGH I MUST SAY YOU'VE BEEN MYSTERIOUS TODAY -- WHAT WITH YOUR FRIEND MR. BULLITT AND ALL.

HE'S SO NICE, UNCLE. A FRIEND OF BILL'S. I'M GLAD YOU COULD HELP HIM. .

IT'S JUST AS WELL UNCLE DOESN'T KNOW *EVERYTHING!*

I *AM* BEGINNING TO WORRY ABOUT BILL THOUGH! HE WAS TO GET OFF EARLY AND STOP HERE BEFORE HE WENT HOME TO DO HIS OWN PACKING. OHH -- IF ANYTHING HAPPENED NOW, I'D DIE..

AND LATER, IN THE TOUGH BROWNSVILLE SECTION OF BROOKLYN...

BETTER STAY BEHIND YOUR PAPER, STEVE. DON'T WANT HER TO SPOT YOU NOW.

RIGHT! CRUISE AROUND THE NEXT CORNER AND STOP.

SHE DOESN'T KNOW ME.

I'M GOING TO CALL HOME AND CHECK WITH PENNY. YOU GO BACK AND WATCH THAT BUILDING -- IF SHE LEAVES AGAIN, FOLLOW HER. NEVER MIND ME. I'LL BE AROUND. WHEN YOU GET A CHANCE, CALL PENNY AND SHE'LL RELAY THE MESSAGE.

I GOT IT.

HMM... NOW A DECISION! CARL RATCLIFFE IS PROBABLY HIDING OUT BACK THERE WITH LOLA. BUT TO GET ANY INFORMATION, I'LL HAVE TO SEPARATE THEM. AND IF I GO BARGING IN NOW, I'LL JUST SCARE THEM INTO MOVING. BESIDES, THERE'S NO LEGAL RAP AGAINST EITHER OF THOSE CHARACTERS. I'D BETTER WAIT -- TRY TO GET LOLA ALONE!

TEL LOCA

BUT A PHONE CALL CHANGES STEVE'S IMMEDIATE PLANS

STEVE! A MAN CALLED ABOUT THE BUDDHA! WOULDN'T GIVE HIS NAME. SAID IF YOU WANTED THE LOWDOWN TO BE AT THE MONKEY CAGE AT THE BRONX ZOO AT 2:30 P.M. GO ALONE, HE SAID, OR NO DICE.

THE MONKEY CAGE! HMM... PROBABLY ONE OF THE GORILLAS WANTS TO GET IN ON THE ACT! THANKS, PENNY. I'LL CALL YOU SOON.

THIS IS PROBABLY A WILD GOOSE CHASE... BUT I'D RATHER CHASE, JUST ON THE CHANCE. IF I START NOW, I CAN JUST ABOUT MAKE IT -- AND JOHNNY ANGER WILL KEEP AN EYE ON LOLA FOR ME. I HOPE NO ONE IS MAKING A MONKEY OUT OF ME.

BACK IN MANHATTAN, EVE IS BUSILY MAKING LAST MINUTE PREPARATIONS FOR HER WEDDING THE NEXT DAY, AND AT THE SAME TIME TRYING TO SOOTHE HER COUSIN'S RUFFLED FEELINGS.

WELL! HOW NICE! THE DISAPPOINTED SUITOR COMES TO PAY HIS LAST RESPECTS. HAH-HAH! HE EVEN *LOOKS* LIKE A FUNERAL!

EVE! PLEASE LET ME SPEAK TO YOU! I'M SORRY ABOUT LAST NIGHT.

MILLICENT! PLEASE CLOSE THE DOOR! HURRY!

EVE! DARLING! PLEASE OPEN THE DOOR. I MUST SEE YOU -- I *MUST*, EVE!

OH, WHY MUST HE BE SUCH A FOOL? DOESN'T HE KNOW I WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE? AND BILL WILL BE COMING SOON ... THERE'LL BE A TERRIBLE SCENE...

SO ENGROSSED IS EVE IN HER OWN THOUGHTS, SHE DOES NOT HEAR THE STEALTHY "CLICK" OF THE LATCH.

Y-YOU! THE GIRL LAST NIGHT!

RIGHT, SISTER! NICE OF YOU TO LEAVE THE DOOR UNLOCKED FOR ME. NOW COME ACROSS!

C-COME ACROSS? I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I..

CUT THE TALK! I WANT THE JADE BUDDHA THAT GUMSHOE TOOK OUT OF MY PURSE. I KNOW YOU'VE GOT IT!

THE LITTLE PISTOL BILL GAVE ME A LONG TIME AGO! IF I CAN GET TO THE DESK DRAWER.

OHH--PLEASE! I DON'T KNOW WHERE...

PULL A GUN ON ME, HUH! YOU LITTLE TRAMP! YOU GOT A LESSON COMING.

OUT COLD! AND I GOTTA GET OUT, BUT FAST, SOON AS I FIND WHAT I CAME AFTER...

FIVE MINUTES LATER..

NO LUCK SO FAR! BUT IT'S GOT TO BE HERE! CARL WILL KILL ME IF I GO BACK WITHOUT IT.

OHH-H!

HUH-- MISSED THAT CLOSET. MIGHT AS WELL HAVE A LOOK.

ONE QUICK FRISK AND I'M THROUGH. LET CARL COME BACK AND DO THE SOME OF THE DIRTY WORK.

AAAA-OOO!

BILL TUCKER, HIS STUNNED BRAIN TRYING TO FIGHT OFF SHOCK AND FEAR, STARES AT THE TERRIBLE SIGHT WHICH GREETS HIM...

EVE! EVE BABY! WHAT HAPPENED?

DARLING! PLEASE! WHAT HAPPENED?

OHHH.. M-MY HEAD...

B-BUT THIS GUN! I DIDN'T HAVE-- I M-MEAN SHE HIT ME AND--OH, I CAN'T REMEMBER! IS S-SHE DEAD, BILL?

YES,- EVE. SHE'S DEAD!

THEN I'M A M-MURDERER! I KILLED HER! OH, BILL! WE WERE SO HAPPY, AND SOB NOW! THEY'LL SEND ME TO PKISON--OR TO THE ELEC-TRIC CHAIR!

BILL'S ONE THOUGHT IS TO SAVE THE GIRL HE LOVES! HIS BRAIN RACES LIKE A FRENZIED RAT ON A TREADMILL...

CALL THE POLICE! I DON'T WANT TO INVOLVE YOU. LET'S GET IT OVER W-WITH.

HOLD ON TIGHT, HONEY. I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING. IF ONLY STEVE WERE HERE, BUT PENNY SAYS HE'S OUT, AND WE CAN'T CALL THE POLICE ..NOW.

BILL RETURNS IN LESS THAN TWO MINUTES...

REMEMBER THE OLD LADY AT THE END OF THE HALL? SHE'S IN THE HOSPITAL NOW-- AND THEY KEEP THE WHEELCHAIR OUTSIDE THE DOOR. I SAW IT AS I CAME IN-- JUST WHAT WE NEED!

A WHEELCHAIR! BUT I DON'T SEE...

BILL WASTES NO TIME IN EXPLANATIONS. WHILE EVE OBEYS HIS INSTRUCTIONS, AND DONS HER HAT AND COAT, HE ARRANGES A MACABRE BUNDLE IN THE WHEELCHAIR.

WE'RE LUCKY THIS IS A SELF-SERVICE ELEVATOR. NOW IF WE CAN GET THROUGH THE LOBBY WITHOUT MEETING ANY FRIENDS -- ESPECIALLY THE OLD LADY'S FRIENDS.

IF WE DO, THEY'LL WANT TO S-STOP AND TALK TO HER.

ELEVATOR

LADY LUCK SMILES AT FIRST.

BROTHER! WE'RE ROLLING IN LUCK. JOE THE DOORMAN MUST BE RUNNING AN ERRAND FOR SOMEONE.

MY LEGS ARE ALL WOBBLY, BILL! LIKE I'D WALKED A MILLION MILES..

AND THEN..

HELLO YOU TWO! WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING?

HELLO!

WE CAN'T TALK NOW, MILLICENT. WE PROMISED MR. PENTON WE'D TAKE HIS WIFE FOR A WALK.

LATER, AROUND A CORNER DOWN THE STREET...

HURRY, BILL! PLEASE! MY NERVES AREN'T GOING TO STAND MUCH MORE!

WE'RE DOING ALL RIGHT SO FAR! JUST AN OLD LADY WE'RE TAKING FOR A NICE RIDE. BUT WE WOULD BUMP INTO THAT COUSIN OF YOURS.

PRESS

MEANTIME JOHNNY ANGER, FOLLOWING STEVE'S INSTRUCTIONS, HAS TAILED LOLA VANCE TO EVE'S APARTMENT...

I DON'T GET ALL THIS! THE DAME LEAVES BROOKLYN AND COMES OVER HERE LICKETY-SPLIT! SHE'S STILL IN THERE! THEN COMES BILL TUCKER AND THE MARTIN BABE SHOVING AN OLD DOLL IN A GO-WAGON! AND THAT OTHER ONE, THE SOUR-PUSSED BABE, KEEPS DUCKING IN AND OUT.

ALSO CURLY LOCKS THERE HAS BEEN IN AND OUT A COUPLE OF TIMES. AND THE OLD GENT THAT LOOKED LIKE A BANK PRESIDENT, OR A PROFESSOR, OR SOMETHING. THEY COULD BE LIVING THERE, OF COURSE. ALL OF WHICH AIN'T HELPING ME TO FIND THAT BLONDE. COULD SHE HAVE DUCKED OUT THE BACK?

THE OLD DOLL IN THE WHEELCHAIR! COME TO THINK OF IT.. SHE WAS WRAPPED UP SORTA FUNNY. DO YOU SUPPOSE.

HALF AN HOUR LATER, A DISGRUNTLED STEVE APPROACHES THE APARTMENT HOUSE.

FINE THING! NO ONE AT THE MONKEY CAGE BUT ME AND THE OTHER MONKEYS! THAT CALL WAS A PHONY -- BUT WHY? AND THERE'S JOHNNY -- WHICH MEANS HE FOLLOWED LOLA HERE! HE LOOKS EXCITED, TOO!

STEVE! HEY, STEVE!

JOHNNY TELLS STEVE EVERYTHING HE HAS OBSERVED...

AND THAT AIN'T ALL! THERE'S ABOUT NINE MILLION COPS UP THERE NOW -- INCLUDING YOUR PAL, LT. JONES. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON -- BUT IT'S THE MOST EXCITEMENT SINCE SOMEONE SHOT PRESIDENT McKINLEY!!

HMM... WELL, THANKS. I'LL TODDLE UP AND SEE WHAT'S COOKING. BUT I'M LIKE YOU, INCLINED TO THINK IT ISN'T GOOD. I WANT TO SEE BILL ANYWAY, BECAUSE PENNY SAID HE WAS TRYING TO GET ME.

AND WHEN STEVE ENTERS EVE'S APARTMENT.

WELL, WELL! COME IN, STEVE! JUST THE MAN I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SEE!

THE END

WE'RE ALL THROUGH PLAYING FOOTSY, THAT'S WHAT. LOLA VANCE, ALIAS LUCILLE VANDIVER, IS DEAD! BUMPED OFF! AND EVE MARTIN AND BILL TUCKER DID THE TRIGGER WORK! I'VE GOT THEM DOWN AT HEADQUARTERS, CHARGED WITH MURDER!

LOLA DEAD! AND YOU HAVE EVE AND BILL FOR THE KILLING? ARE YOU NUTS, BARNEY?

NAH! BUT THEY MUST HAVE BEEN TO THINK THEY COULD HIDE HER BODY! WE GOT A PHONE CALL TIPPING US TO LOOK FOR A SEDAN WITH A PRESS STICKER ON IT. IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD. THE RADIO CAR HAD THEM IN FIVE MINUTES... WITH THE BODY!

THAT AIN'T ALL! WE GAVE THE GIRL A TEST -- AND SHE FIRED THE GUN ALL RIGHT! GOT POWDER GRAINS EMBEDDED IN HER HAND! MUST HAVE BEEN SOME SCRAP IN THIS PLACE! AND THEY TALKED... ABOUT A BUDDHA. NOW YOU'D BETTER TALK!

OKAY, BARNEY. I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT THE BUDDHA. BUT THIS IS NO ONE'S FAULT BUT MINE. IF I HADN'T GOTTEN BILL AND EVE MIXED UP IN IT... AND MOST OF ALL-- IF I HADN'T SPENT THE AFTER-NOON AT THE MON-KEY CAGE AT THE BRONX ZOO!

STEVE TELLS LT. JONES THE STORY OF THE BUDDHA AND MR. YIN, AND LATER AT HEADQUARTERS, IS ALLOWED TO SEE BILL AND EVE...

SO DON'T WORRY TOO MUCH, KIDS. UNLESS YOU REALLY KILLED LOLA, THAT IS! I GOT YOU IN THIS--AND I'LL GET YOU OUT!

I WAS A FOOL, STEVE... LOST MY HEAD. ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS GETTING THE BODY OUT OF THERE.

HE DID IT FOR ME, STEVE.

WELL, SOMEONE SAW YOU DO IT AND CALLED THE COPS. ANOTHER ANON-YMOUS TIP--A WOMAN. AND NOW I WANT YOU TO TELL ME EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED, EVE. EXACTLY AND IN THE ORDER IT HAPPENED.

EVE TRIES HARD TO REMEMBER EVERYTHING...

... AND WHEN MILLI-CENT LEFT, I SLAMMED THE DOOR IN RONALD'S FACE. AFTER HE WENT AWAY, UNCLE CAME, BUT HE LEFT SOON... HAD AN APPOINTMENT AT 3:15. AND IT MUST HAVE BEEN ONLY A FEW MINUTES LATER WHEN I TURNED AND SAW LOLA. SHE WANTED THE BUDDHA. AND WE STRUGGLED...

AND THE LAST YOU REMEMBER SHE STRUCK YOU ON THE HEAD?

YES! BUT WHEN I CAME TO, I-- I HAD THE PISTOL IN MY HAND AND SHE WAS DEAD! OH, STEVE, DO YOU THINK I REALLY DID IT?

NOW, HONEY!

STEVE FINDS LT. JONES PUZZLING OVER THE BUDDHA WHICH STEVE HAS GIVEN HIM BY REQUEST...

YOU KNOW, STEVE, I DON'T LIKE THE WINK THIS THING IS GIVING ME! AND I STILL THINK I OUGHT TO PULL THAT MR. YIN OF YOURS IN.

SUIT YOURSELF, BARNEY. BUT RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE OTHER BUSINESS. I HELD OUT ON YOU... CARL RATCLIFF IS IN TOWN. LET'S GO GET HIM.

YOU WHAT? SO HELP ME, STEVE BULLITT, I'M GONNA HAVE YOUR LICENSE YET!

STEVE TAKES THE POLICE TO THE BROOKLYN TENEMENT VISITED BY LOLA VANCE EARLIER IN THE DAY...

EASY NOW, STEVE. THIS GUY IS DANGEROUS. AND IF HE *DID* KNOCK OFF THE DAME, HE'S NOT GOING TO GIVE UP WITHOUT A FIGHT.

NOT A SOUND FROM UP THERE, BARNEY.

WE'RE COMING IN, RATCLIFFE!
HE'S PROBABLY DUCKED OUT!
ANOTHER STIFF!
OUR ERSTWHILE CURIO AND ANTIQUE DEALER SOLOMON SLADE! THIS IS ONE DEAL HE WON'T LIE OUT OF!
WELL, I BETTER GET THE BROOKLYN BOYS ON THE PHONE. THEY DON'T LIKE MANHATTAN COPS FOOLING WITH THEIR STIFFS.
ONE THING YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT, BARNEY, BILL AND THE GIRL COULDN'T HAVE KILLED SLADE TOO.
LOOKS LIKE RATCLIFFE TOOK HIS BELONGINGS, EH? NOT PLANNING ON COMING BACK.
CAN'T SAY I BLAME HIM.
NO SIGN OF ANOTHER BUDDHA AROUND -- THE REAL ONE! BUT OF COURSE RATCLIFFE TOOK IT WITH HIM.
I'LL PUT OUT AN ALARM ON RATCLIFFE RIGHT AWAY. WE'LL GET HIM! BUT YOU'D BETTER COME BACK TO HEADQUARTERS, STEVE. MIGHT BE SOMETHING INTERESTING.
SURE, BARNEY
POLICE
BACK AT HEADQUARTERS, STEVE FINDS THAT LT. JONES, AFTER HEARING HIS STORY OF THE BUDDHA, AND TALKING TO JOHNNY ANGER, HAS WASTED NO TIME IN CASTING OUT HIS NET...
MR. YIN!
GOOD EVENING, EVERYONE. HOPE I DIDN'T INCONVENIENCE ANYBODY TOO MUCH.
WE'LL SOON KNOW IF ANY OF THEM FIRED A GUN RECENTLY. BUT TO BE FRANK, STEVE, I THINK I'VE GOT THE KILLER ALREADY. EVE MARTIN! SHE JUST BLACKED OUT AND FORGOT IT.
WE'LL SEE, BARNEY BUT IF EVE MARTIN IS A MURDERER, I'LL EAT MY HAT.

MUCH LATER...

WHEW.. WHAT A HEADACHE! AND LIKE I TOLD YOU, STEVE, WE GOT NOTHING. NONE OF THEM FIRED A GUN., NONE OF THEM HAVE RECORDS. THAT MR. YIN IS CLEAN AS A HOUND'S TOOTH. THEY ALL TELL STRAIGHT STORIES, TOO.

THANKS FOR LETTING ME IN ON THIS, BARNEY. SAVED ME A LOT OF LEG WORK. BUT IT'S TIME FOR ME TO JOG ALONG.

GOOD NIGHT, STEVE. AND TAKE AN OLD DOG'S ADVICE, SON. THE GIRL DID IT! DON'T LET HER MAKE A SUCKER OUT OF YOU.

GOOD NIGHT, BARNEY!

BUT JUST AS STEVE FINISHES HIS STORY AND PREPARES TO RELAX...

OHH, ME! NO REST FOR THE WICKED!

JUST A MOMENT, MR YIN. HE'S RIGHT HERE.

FORGIVE ME, PLEASE! SUCH A LATE CALL! BUT THERE IS ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT, MR. BULLITT! I NO LONGER DESIRE YOU TO FIND MY BUDDHA. IF YOU WILL CONSIDER THE CASE CLOSED, PLEASE. I WILL MAIL AN ADDITIONAL SUM OF A HUNDRED DOLLARS!

YOU'RE THE BOSS, MR. YIN. BUT I'VE GOT A LEAD ON THE BUDDHA. I'M PRETTY SURE A MAN NAMED CARL RATCLIFFE HAS IT. BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT IT...

THAT IS CORRECT! I NO LONGER HAVE AN INTEREST IN THE BUDDHA.

FIRED, BY JINGO! OUR MR. YIN DOESN'T RELISH BEING HAULED IN FOR QUESTIONING, EVIDENTLY. LOLA'S MURDER SCARED HIM, TOO. BUT STILL-- THE BUDDHA WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SO VALUABLE! WHY GIVE UP NOW?

HE CAN FIRE ME-- BUT HE CAN'T MAKE ME QUIT! NOW IF I COULD ONLY ANSWER SOME OF THESE QUESTIONS...

Why did Lola return for the phony Buddha when she and Ratcliffe had the genuine Buddha, think Eve had killed Lola? If not Eve -- how did Eve come to fire pistol? Who is making all the anonymous phone calls? Why did Yin suddenly lose interest in the Buddha?

BARNEY IS GOING TO LOVE ME FOR THIS-- BUT WHY SHOULD HE BE THE ONLY ONE TO GET ANY SLEEP!

JUST A BELATED THOUGHT, BARNEY. I NEED MORE DETAILS ON THOSE ALIBIS WE COLLECTED THIS AFTERNOON. CHRISTOPHER MARTIN, FOR INSTANCE. AND THE BENNETT WOMAN. ALSO HOW ARE THEY FIXED FINANCIALLY?

THIS COULDN'T WAIT TILL MORNING, I SUPPOSE? OKAY-- BUT IF YOU'RE THINKING NASTY THOUGHTS ABOUT MARTIN, YOU'RE NUTS. THE GIRL HERSELF ADMITS HE LEFT AT 3 P.M.! YOUR MAN, JOHNNY ANGER, SAW HIM COME OUT ABOUT THAT TIME. AND HE WAS AT HIS CLUB AT 3:15 AND DIDN'T LEAVE TILL WE HAULED HIM IN. GOT A DOZEN WITNESSES TO THAT.

AS FOR FINANCES--MARTIN SEEMS TO BE ALL RIGHT. HE'S TRUSTEE FOR EVE MARTIN'S FORTUNE. THE BENNETT DAME IS BROKE-- DEPENDS ON HER COUSIN FOR A HOME, CLOTHES, EVERYTHING. NOW CAN I GO BACK TO BED?

PLEASANT DREAMS, BARNEY! SLEEP TIGHT!

NEXT MORNING, STEVE VISITS RONALD CARSTAIRS, APARTMENT UNANNOUNCED.

NOT VERY POLITE TO BARGE IN LIKE THIS, BUT EMILY NEVER WROTE A BOOK ON MURDER! HMM... EMPTY! BUT STILL A PERFUME OF BACON AND EGGS!

BULLITT/ W-WHAT DO YOU WANT? YOU'VE GOT NO RIGHT...

COME ON, FELLOW! LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT THE ENVELOPE.

A WAD THAT'D CHOKE A HORSE! YOU WERE GOING TO TRAVEL IN STYLE, CARSTAIRS. AND I'M SURE LT. JONES WILL BE INTERESTED IN THIS!

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO TAKE THAT MONEY! YOU'RE ONLY A PRIVATE DETECTIVE. I'LL SUE--

SUE AHEAD, SWEETHEART! BUT HANG AROUND TOWN. DON'T WORRY-- YOU'LL GET YOUR MONEY BACK. YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEND THE TURNKEYS OUT TO BUY YOU LOTS OF VERY NICE THINGS.

STEVE SPENDS AN HOUR TALKING TO RESIDENTS OF EVE MARTIN'S APARTMENT HOUSE, AND IN SEARCHING VARIOUS SPOTS. THEN, PASS-KEY READY, HE APPROACHES THE GIRL'S EMPTY APARTMENT.

GET 'EM UP, BULLITT! I MEAN BUSINESS!

THE ELUSIVE MR RATCLIFFE, AT LAST! BEEN QUITE A CHASE, CARL, YOU LIVING HERE NOW?

CAN THE WISECRACKS, BULLITT! I DO THE TALKING. AND I'LL MAKE IT SHORT AND SWEET. FIRST, YOU GET IN THAT CHAIR OVER THERE-- AND KEEP YOUR HANDS IN SIGHT..

YOU SEE THIS, BULLITT? IT'S THE *REAL* BUDDHA- THE ONE YIN WANTS. I NEED GETAWAY DOUGH -- AND IF YOU WAS TO TAKE IT TO HIM AND GET ONE GRAND, I'LL GIVE YOU A CUT. HE WAS GONNA GIVE LOLA THAT FOR IT!

YOU'VE GOT A NERVE, CARL. AND A MURDER RAP HANGING OVER YOU AS WELL! YOU KILLED SOLOMON SLADE, REMEMBER? AND MAYBE LOLA. YOU THINK I'D HELP YOU?

STEVE HOOKS HIS TOE INTO A FRINGED LOOP OF THE RUG ..

YIIII! DON'T! DON'T! I QUIT! I QUIT!

THIS LUG IS LUCKY.. I CAN'T AFFORD TO MESS HIM UP TOO MUCH. HE'S GOT TO BE ABLE TO TALK AND TELL PLENTY!

STEVE TAKES THE COMPLETELY SUBDUED RATCLIFFE TO CENTRE STREET STATION AND TURNS HIM OVER TO LT. JONES...

HE'S ALL YOURS, STEVE. HE SIGNED A CONFESSION, ADMITTING KILLING SLADE, AND SO MY WORRIES ARE OVER. TALK TO HIM.

WHEN MR. YIN GAVE LOLA THE BUDDHA, SHE WROTE ME ABOUT IT. THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE DOUGH IN IT. SO I ASKED SLADE, AND IN A COUPLE OF DAYS HE TOLD ME IT WAS WORTH FOUR GRAND TO HIM! THREE MORE THAN YIN WAS GONNA GIVE LOLA.

WE FIGURED A DOUBLE-CROSS! I MET LOLA IN 'FRISCO AND WE GOT ANOTHER BUDDHA MADE. WE KNEW WE COULD SELL THE PHONY TO SLADE, BUT WE COULDN'T FOOL LU YIN. AND WE WANTED TO HOLD ON TO THE REAL ONE TILL WE FOUND OUT ITS REAL WORTH. BUT LU YIN'S POWERFUL, GOT LOTS OF DOUGH, AND IS DANGEROUS. I LEFT LOLA IN 'FRISCO AND CAME BACK TO KEEP AN EYE ON YIN.

I KNEW WE GOTTA DO SOMETHING FAST! LOLA STAYED IN 'FRISCO TO GET THE FAKE BUDDHA-- IT TOOK TIME TO MAKE--AND SHE WAS DUE IN THAT NIGHT. SO WE RIGGED THE FAKE HOLD-UP. THEN WE COULD TELL LU YIN WE HAD THE BUDDHA STOLEN FROM US. AND SELL THE FAKE TO SLADE FOR FOUR GRAND.

AND YOU KEPT THIS, THE REAL ONE, WHILE LOLA BROUGHT ALONG THE FAKE. SHE PICKED THE BLOCKED ROAD SO YOU COULD STOP US. YOU FIGURED I WAS A GOOD WITNESS-- ONE MR. YIN WOULD BELIEVE.

THAT'S RIGHT. BUT SOMEONE ELSE WAS FOLLOWING HER, TOO. WE DIDN'T KNOW THAT TILL THEY SHOWED UP AND SPOILED EVERYTHING. I THINK THEY WERE SLADE'S MEN-- HE DIDN'T TRUST US.

AFTER YOU TOOK LOLA TO THAT DAME'S APARTMENT, SHE RAISED THE WINDOW AND HID IN THE CLOSET. SHE HEARD EVERYTHING! WHEN THE COPS CAME, SHE BLEW. SHE HEARD YOU GIVE THE BUDDHA TO EVE MARTIN! BUT NEXT DAY YOU AND THE COPS WENT TO SLADE, AND HE GOT SCARED. THOUGHT WE WERE GONNA SELL THE BUDDHA TO SOMEONE ELSE. WHILE LOLA WAS AT THE DAME'S APARTMENT, SLADE CAME AND GOT TOUGH. I KILLED HIM!

AFTER CARL RATCLIFFE IS RETURNED TO HIS CELL...

NICE PEOPLE! MORE CROSSES THAN A TIC-TAC-TOE GAME! AND NOW WE GOT *BOTH* BUDDHAS. BUT THERE'S STILL A CHARGE OF MURDER AGAINST EVE MARTIN.

HMM... I NEVER THOUGHT OF LOLA PRETENDING TO LEAVE, THEN HIDING IN THE CLOSET AND LISTENING! *THAT'S* WHY SHE WENT BACK TO EVE'S, THINKING EVE HAD THE BUDDHA. AND *THAT'S* WHY SOMEONE ELSE KILLED HER!

HAH--RATCLIFFE MARKED THE BASE OF THE GENUINE BUDDHA WITH RED WAX! AND PRETTY SOON I'M GOING TO MARK A KILLER. GET THEM ALL TOGETHER, BARNEY.

STEVE SPENDS THE AFTERNOON IN MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR EXPOSING A MURDERER. AND EARLY THAT EVENING...

I'LL START WITH YOU, MISS BENNETT! AND YOUR LOVELY TELEPHONE VOICE! YOU HATE YOUR COUSIN EVE--AND IF SHE GOT MARRIED, YOU WERE OUT OF A HOME. YOU CALLED THE POLICE THE OTHER NIGHT, FROM THE EXTENSION IN YOUR ROOM! AND YOU CALLED THEM YESTERDAY AFTERNOON WHEN BILL AND EVE MET YOU WITH THE WHEELCHAIR!

I DIDN'T MEAN--

NOW FOR YOU, CARSTAIRS--**YOU BLACKMAILER!** YOU GOT THIS MONEY--IN THIS ENVELOPE--FROM THE KILLER OF LOLA VANCE! YOU WERE HANGING AROUND THE APARTMENT AND THE YOU SAW KILLER!

NO! NO, I DIDN'T! YOU CAN'T PROVE IT!

BUT I CAN! YOU SAW THE KILLER, AND INSTEAD OF REPORTING YOUR SUSPICIONS TO THE POLICE, YOU WENT TO THE MURDERER AND HE PAID YOU! THESE ARE NEW BILLS. THEY CAN BE TRACED!

..AND THEY'LL BE TRACED TO YOU, **CHRISTOPHER MARTIN! YOU MURDERED LOLA VANCE!**

ME, SIR! HAVE YOU LOST YOUR SENSES?

REMEMBER THIS, MARTIN? OFF YOUR MEMO PAD. YOU SAID YOU'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN ABOUT WINKING BUDDHAS--AND HAD TO REFRESH YOUR MEMORY! THAT WAS YESTERDAY, OCT 21ST! BUT THIS WAS IN THE BOOK AS A MARKER--OCT 20TH ...YOU HAD BEEN READING UP ON THE BUDDHAS WHY DID YOU LIE?

OCT. 20

YOU **ARE** A FOOL, MR. BULLITT! I'LL BREAK YOU FOR THIS!

PERHAPS! BUT YOU LIED--BECAUSE SLADE HAD BEEN TO SEE YOU ABOUT THE BUDDHA. YOU KNEW HIM SLIGHTLY. AND THE FAKE BUDDHA WAS SO WELL DONE, IT FOOLED YOU! YOU ADMITTED IT. YOU NEEDED MONEY, AND SUDDENLY YOU SAW A CHANCE TO GET IT... BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT **EVE HAD THE BUDDHA.**

LOLA VANCE MADE THE SAME MISTAKE! NEITHER OF YOU KNEW THAT I'D TAKEN THE BUDDHA BACK! SO **YOU** MADE A PHONE CALL, MARTIN, AND MADE A MONKEY OUT OF ME! I WAS TO MEET YOU AT THE BRONX ZOO. BUT YOU NEVER CAME--YOU WENT TO STEAL THE BUDDHA FROM EVE.

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT YOU DID. YOU ARRIVED AT EVE'S AT ABOUT 2:30. WHEN SHE LEFT YOU TO PUT HER FLOWERS IN WATER, YOU UNLATCHED THE DOOR AND SET THE CLOCK AHEAD **ONE HALF HOUR.** WHEN YOU LEFT, CALLING ATTENTION TO THE TIME, SHE THOUGHT IT WAS **3:00 O'CLOCK!**

STEVE HAS A SMALL SUITCASE BROUGHT IN...

YOU WENT DOWN THE HALL TO THE JANITOR'S CLOSET. YOU PUT ON THESE WORK CLOTHES AND GLOVES AND A HANDKERCHIEF OVER YOUR FACE THEN YOU WENT BACK TO KNOCK EVE UNCONSCIOUS AND STEAL THE BUDDHA. WITH THE HALF HOUR YOU'D GAINED YOU HAD PLENTY OF TIME. BUT LOLA WAS ALREADY THERE.

YOUR PLANS WERE UPSET! YOU SAW EVE UNCONSCIOUS AND HEARD LOLA SEARCHING. YOU HID IN A CLOSET, PROBABLY. ANYWAY, LOLA SAW YOU, YOU STRUGGLED, AND SHE RIPPED OFF THE HANDKERCHIEF AND SAW YOUR FACE, YOU KILLED HER! YOU PUT THE GUN IN EVE'S HAND AND SHOT LOLA AGAIN! AND YOU SMASHED THE CLOCK--SO YOUR TIME ALIBI WOULD STAND UP!

ENOUGH OF THIS! I WON'T STAND FOR IT!

JUST A BIT MORE. IT WAS NOW ABOUT 3:00 O'CLOCK BY THE CORRECT TIME. HOWEVER, YOU HAD EVE TO SWEAR YOU HAD LEFT BY 3 O'CLOCK--BECAUSE OF YOUR TRICK. AND JOHNNY ANGER SAW YOU LEAVE AGAIN AT 3--THE *CORRECT* TIME. YOU WERE AT YOUR CLUB AT 3:15, AGAIN THE *CORRECT* TIME!

IT SEEMED ODD THAT YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WITH A *TIME* ALIBI! AND THE CLOCK HAD BEEN DAMAGED DELIBERATELY--NOT BY A FALL! AND THE LIE ABOUT THE BUDDHA, THE BOOK MARKER! AND CARSTAIRS, HANGING AROUND, MUST HAVE SEEN YOU IN THE JANITOR'S CLOTHES. HE ASKED FOR MONEY TO KEEP QUIET. WE'LL TRACE THOSE BILLS, ALL RIGHT!

NO--NO, I TELL YOU! ALL LIES! A FRAMEUP! I--I FEEL FAINT!

ONE LAST THING! WHEN YOU WERE BROUGHT IN, YOU KNEW NOTHING OF THE CRIME - YET YOU SAID "WHAT? EVE *SHOOT* A WOMAN?" HOW DID YOU KNOW SHE WAS *SHOT?*

CHRISTOPHER MARTIN, AT LONG LAST, CONFESSES TO THE MURDER OF LOLA VANCE. AFTER HE IS LOCKED UP, STEVE AND LT. JONES ACCOMPANY MR. YIN TO HIS MANSION..

IT IS MY SORROW, GENTLEMEN, THAT I HAVE CAUSED SUCH TROUBLE! TWO PEOPLE DEAD--AND TWO WHO WILL BE EXECUTED! I SHALL NOT EASILY FORGIVE MYSELF!

ONE MORE THING, MR. YIN. HOW DID YOU GET THE *REAL* BUDDHA? IT WAS THE SAME ONE YOU GAVE LOLA IN KOREA?

AS SOON AS I SAW THE FIRST BUDDHA, MR. BULLITT, I KNEW WHAT HAD HAPPENED. ONLY ONE MAN IN THE WORLD CAN WORK JADE LIKE THAT TODAY. HE LIVES IN SAN FRANCISCO--AND IT WAS TO HIM THE WOMAN TOOK MY BUDDHA TO HAVE IT DUPLICATED!

FINALLY REACHED HIM BY TELEPHONE. HE CAME BY AIRSHIP AND BROUGHT THE BUDDHA TO ME.

YES, MR. BULLITT! I HAVE MY BUDDHA! THE TWELFTH AND LAST -- AFTER FORTY YEARS OF SEARCHING. YOU SEE THEM NOW -- THE TWELVE WINKING BUDDHAS OF EMPEROR KWAN SIK!

I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D FIRE ME UNLESS YOU ALREADY HAD WHAT YOU WANTED.

FOR PETE'S SAKE -- SOMEONE TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!

AS MR. MARTIN TOLD YOU, KWAN SIK HAD 12 CHILDREN. HE LOVED THEM ALL, BUT ALSO, HE HAD A GREAT DIAMOND -- THE YELLOW STAR. HE KNEW EACH CHILD COVETED IT, SO HE DEVISED A WAY IN WHICH EACH CHILD COULD BE HAPPY AND NONE DISAPPOINTED.

A GOOD TRICK, MR. YIN. JUST HOW --

IN THOSE DAYS THERE WERE GREAT ARTISTS IN KOREA, MR. BULLITT. MEN WHO COULD DO MIRACLES WITH JADE. KWAN SIK EMPLOYED TWELVE SKILLED JADE WORKERS, AND TO ONE OF THEM, SECRETLY, HE GAVE THE YELLOW STAR. IT WAS TO BE PUT INTO ONE OF THE BUDDHAS, WITH THE JADE CUT AND JOINTED SO SKILLFULLY NO ONE WOULD KNOW. NO ONE EXCEPT THE EMPEROR AND THE ARTISAN.

WHEN THE BUDDHAS WERE COMPLETED, THE EMPEROR GAVE A CRUEL ORDER! ALL THE TWELVE ARTISANS WERE SLAIN, SEPARATELY BUT AT THE SAME TIME. THEN, SO THE LEGEND GOES, THE EMPEROR SO MIXED THE BUDDHAS THAT FINALLY NOT EVEN HE COULD TELL WHICH CONTAINED THE YELLOW STAR.

BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, MR. YIN. DIDN'T HE ***WANT*** THE DIAMOND? THIS KWAN-KWAN WHATEVER HE WAS?

IT HAS BEEN SAID THE ORIENTAL MIND IS SUBTLE. THE EMPEROR GAVE EACH OF HIS CHILDREN ONE OF THE BUDDHAS -- AND TO EACH HE WHISPERED THAT ***HE*** ALONE POSSESSED THE YELLOW STAR. AND EACH ONE WAS WARNED NOT TO SPEAK OF IT, LEST IT CAUSE JEALOUSY. SO ALL WERE CONTENT.

A WEDDING IS JUST WHAT I NEED NOW. SOME SWEET ORGAN MUSIC TO TAKE A BAD TASTE OUT OF MY MOUTH.

I HOPE THOSE KIDS MADE IT. I SENT THEM OFF IN A SQUAD CAR, WITH ORDERS TO USE IT ALL THEY NEEDED.

HERE'S A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR YOU, EVE, FROM YOUR DOUBLE INDIAN-GIVER. THIS TIME IT'S YOURS FOR KEEPS. AND AS MR. YIN WOULD SAY, YOU TWO HAVE ALL THE NECESSARY INGREDIENTS TO MAKE YOUR OWN HAPPINESS! NO NEED TO RELY ON THE WINKING BUDDHA!

THE END